

“Questions Every Christian Should Ask Themselves,” Part 3 - 1 Corinthians 8:7-9 – April 26th, 2015

- Today's teaching will be part three of a series I've titled, "Questions Every Christian Should Ask Themselves."
- Before we jump into today's teaching, I would like to thank those of you locally and from our online church for your comments.
- It was brought to my attention that Halal meat is readily available in countries like Australia among others and it's a big problem.

- For the benefit of those who may not know what Halal food is, last week I referenced a great website called, "gotquestions.org."

Kindly allow me to read just a brief excerpt from their answer to the question: "Is it allowable for a Christian to eat halal food?" Answer: The word halal means "permissible" in Arabic. It refers to food, objects, or actions that are allowed in Islam. Among other things, halal meat must be killed with a sharp knife and drained of blood. No carnivorous animals, birds of prey, or meat contaminated with non-permissible substances can be used. This, in and of itself, is a healthy way of preparing meat. The problem comes when Allah's name is pronounced over the meat during the butchering process. Many interpret this to mean the animal was sacrificed to a false god—an idol.

A local member posted this on our Calvary Chapel Kaneohe Facebook page quoting one source as saying, "Over sixty Aussie brands have chosen to Halal certify their products, but a new Facebook page has thousands of Australians calling to boycott it."

Another related post explains why Australians, which presumably would include a constituency of Australian Christians are boycotting Halal certified products. According to one source, there is proof that the monies from Halal certified products go directly towards the funding of Islamic terrorism. Consider just three of several quotes from a 2013 Annual report ...by the the Islamic Council of WA, 1. "Our Halal subcommittee now is functional and income starts coming Alhamdulillah (meaning 'all Praise and thanks be to Allah'). 2. "Our next aim is to expand Halal certification for local and international business insha'Allah (Allah willing). 3. "The donations were made through al Imdaad charity, to ensure that no recriminations could be directed at ICWA." The source notes that, "Al Imdaad is a fake charity that has raised millions of dollars and donated the money to Hamas, the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, and various other terrorist groups," and that "Mosques and Muslim groups in Australia are directly contributing to Al Imdaad." <http://islam4infidels.com/proof-halal-funds-terrorism/>

- Be that as it may, this brings us to our text today, which as you might imagine, is now a serious problem because of Halal meat.
- Actually, I was asked by a number of people if I would now buy Halal certified products knowing full well what Halal is all about.
- My answer to this question is vehemently and adamantly, "no I would absolutely not!" Having said that, let's just close in prayer.

- In all seriousness we need to sort of roll up our arm sleeves, so-to-speak, and work through this passage concerning this issue.
- The reason I titled this series, "Questions Every Christian Should Ask Themselves," is because this is in effect what Paul does.
- In other words, Paul is giving us a template of sorts with which to answer certain questions specifically related to our freedoms.

1. Am I tearing down or building up? (Verses 1-3)

- Here Paul contrasts knowledge with love telling them that knowledge will puff up, whereas love on the other hand will build up.

2. Do I know the truth about false gods? (Verses 4-6)

- Paul says concerning things offered to idols, we know an idol is nothing in the world, because we know the only one true God.

3. Will my freedom be a stumbling block? (Verses 7-9)

- v7 Paul says some Christians don't possess this knowledge about idols and their conscience is defiled when they eat this meat.
- v8 He goes on to say that food does not commend us to God, and as such, we are neither better nor are we worse if we eat it.
- v9 He's quick to say that we must beware lest somehow this liberty of ours becomes a stumbling block to those who are weak.

- Couple of thoughts here right out of the chute, the first of which is that Paul keeps repeating himself concerning who are weak.
- To me, the question becomes why? Why the need to be repetitive? I believe the answer is twofold; first, it's that of a mindset.
- By that I mean the faulty mindset amongst Christians is the brother or sister who possesses not this freedom is the strong one.

One commentator of this said, "Although eating meat offered to idols is not a threat to the true God, and although eating meat offered to idols won't affect me personally, I need to be aware that it may indeed affect those around me. Our natural tendency is to think that the brother or sister who would be righteously indignant over the eating of meat offered to idols would be the spiritual giant, the one most sensitive to the heart of God. But Paul calls such a one "weak." Paul says, in effect, the person who is bound by rules and regulations isn't mature, but weak—for the more spiritually mature one is, the more free he or she will be."

- The second thought on this has to do with what's at stake concerning the weaker Christian, were I to end up stumbling them.
- I find it rather interesting how Paul warns that when we stumble the weak Christian, we're actually wounding and harming them.
- If this weren't bad enough, next week, Lord willing, we'll see that to wound them is a sin not only against them but the Lord too.

- One final thought in closing and it has to do with legalism. Legalism is one of the most dangerous dynamics in the church today.

1 Timothy 4:1-5 (NIV) — 1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.